The Royal Sweeper

(A tale from Jagannath culture)

Text: Ramendra Kumar

Concept & Art : Rabindra Nath Sahu

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एकः सूते सकलम्

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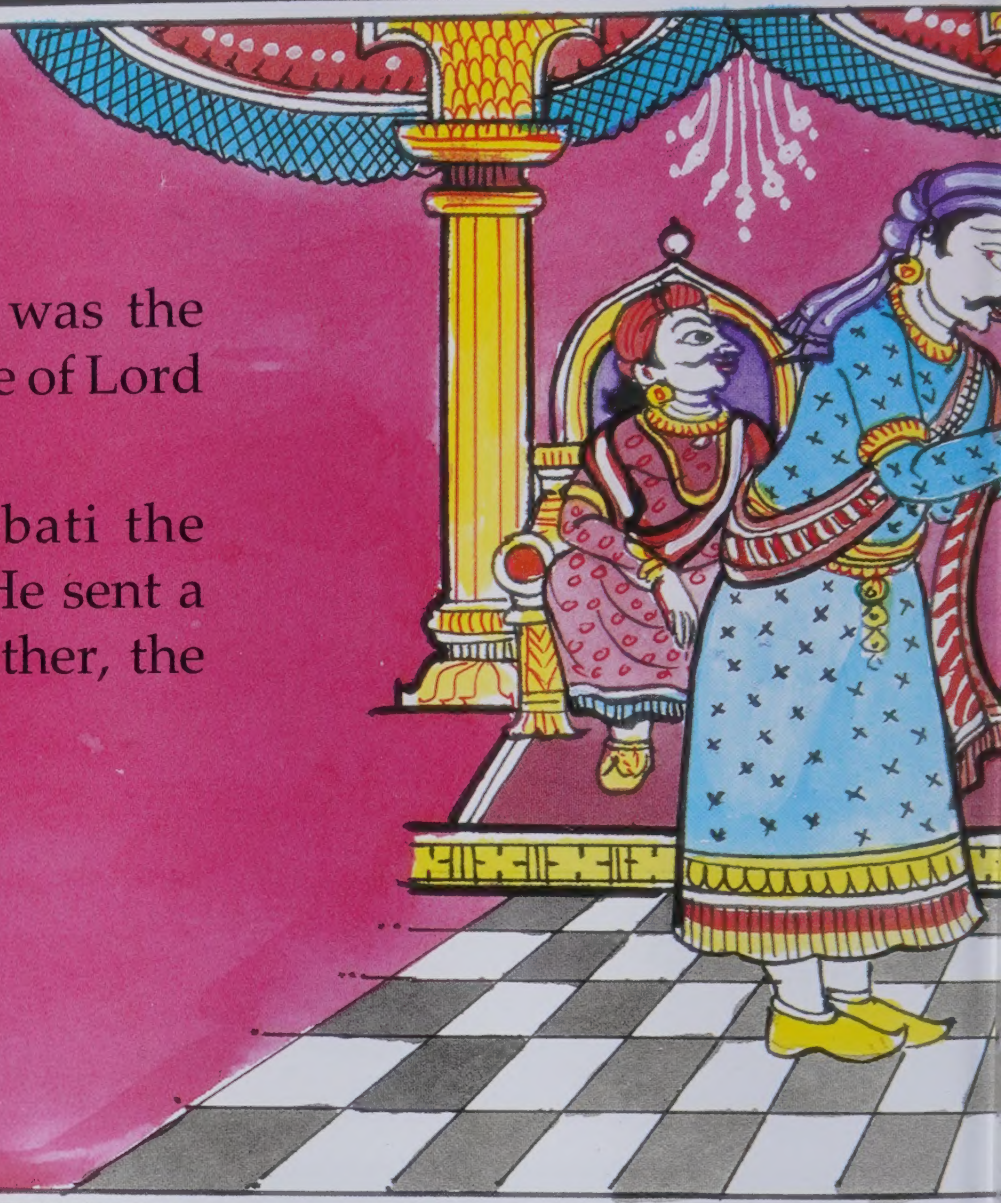
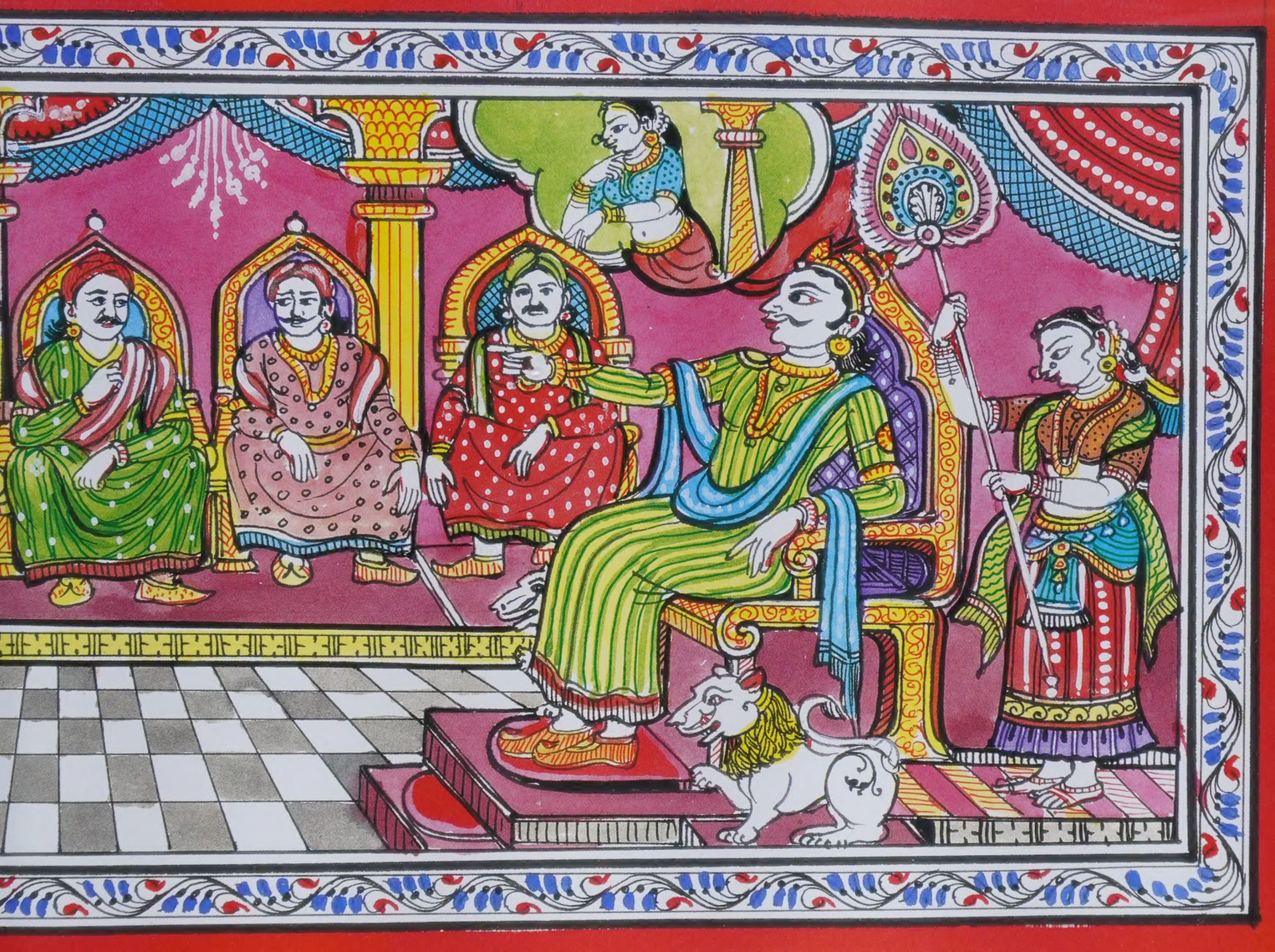
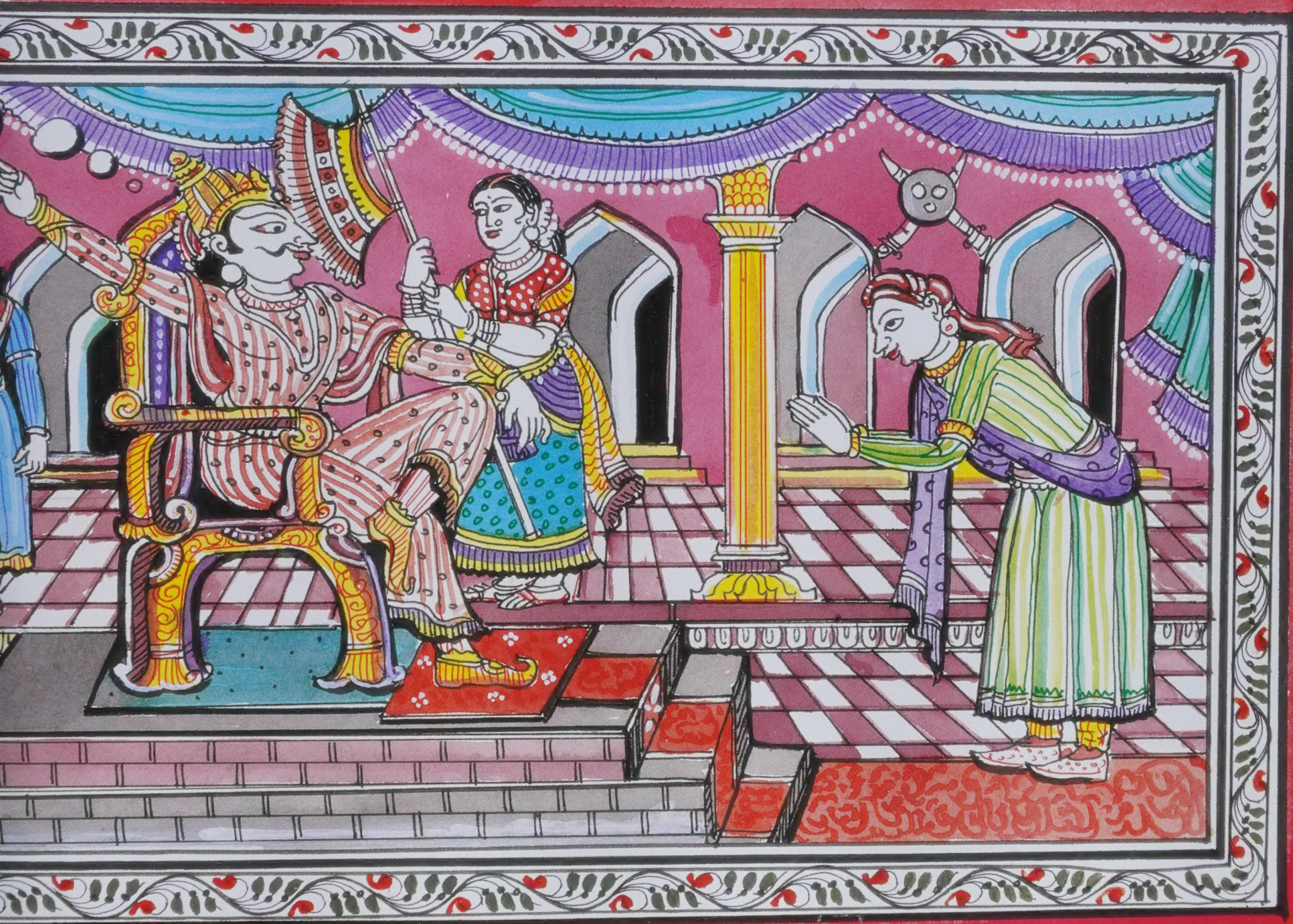
Gajapati Purushottama Deva was the King of Utkal. He was a devotee of Lord Jagannath.

He wished to marry Padmabati the beautiful princess of Kanchi. He sent a proposal of marriage to her father, the King of Kanchi.

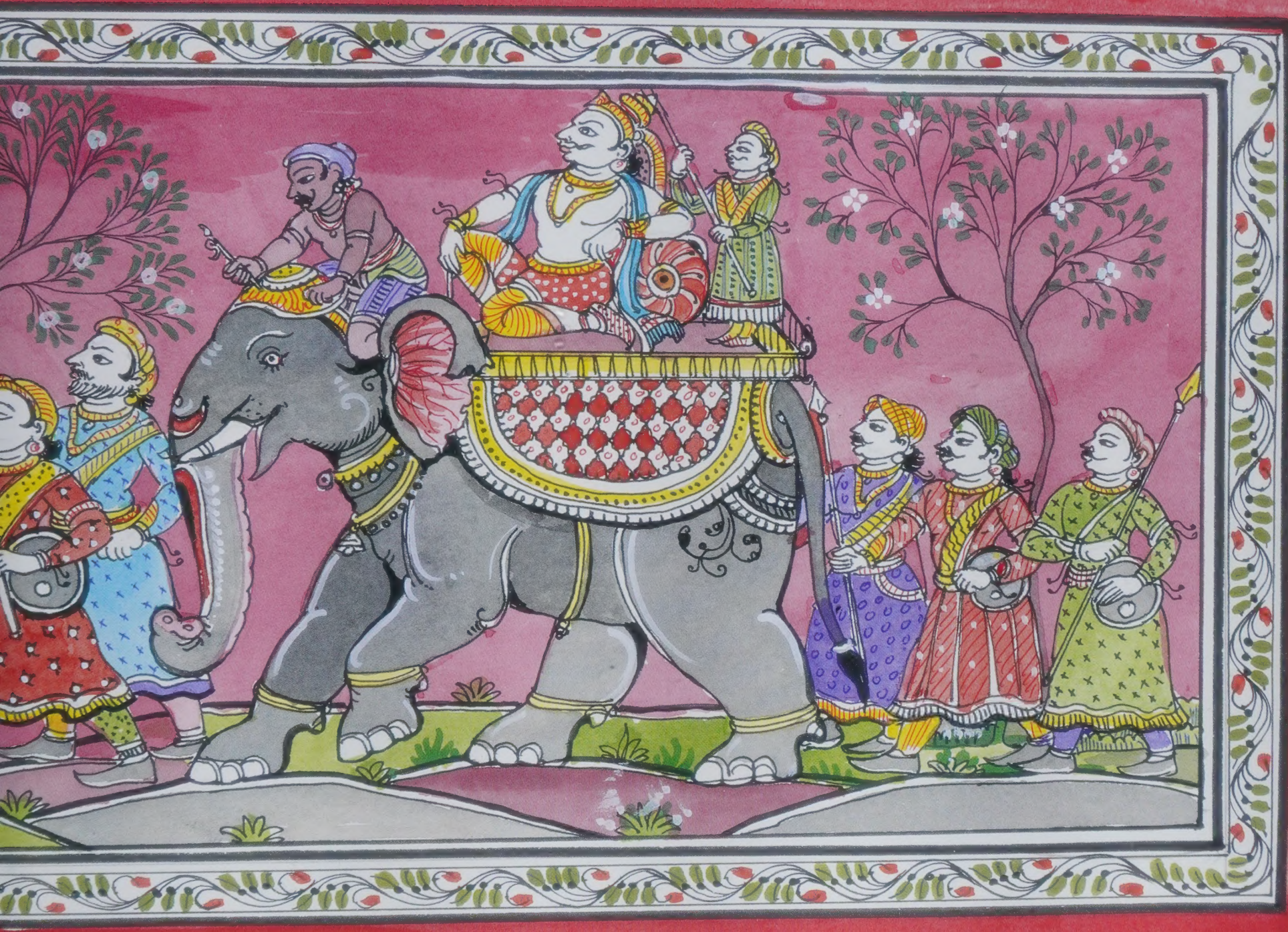




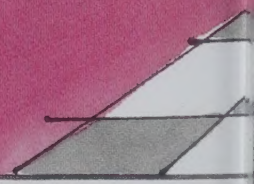
The King on coming to know that Purushottama Deva had once swept the floor of Lord Jagannath's chariot got angry, "I will not allow my daughter to marry a sweeper." He declared.



Purushottama Deva felt insulted and attacked Kanchi. He was defeated.



He waited for a year and then went to the temple of Lord Jagannath and prayed. After seeking the Lord's blessing, he started his campaign.



On the way the King met a milkmaid called Manika. She told him that two men on horseback had asked her for some curd. After eating the curd they gave her a ring. Manika gave the ring to Purushottama Deva. The King looked at the ring and was surprised. It was the diamond ring of Lord Jagannath himself. Purushottama Deva was happy. Lord Jagannath had blessed his campaign.

Finally, the King of Kanchi was defeated and princess Padmabati was imprisoned.

Purushottama Deva told his minister to take her away and get her married to a sweeper. The minister took her home.

At the next Ratha Yatra, the King as per the custom swept the floor of the chariot.

As he stepped down, the minister said, "Oh King! I searched far and wide but could not find a more suitable sweeper than you. So please accept her hand in marriage."

The King agreed and married princess Padmabati. The Royal couple lived happily ever after.

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